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TO AMEMBASSY PANAMA

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 237368

FOR AMBASSADOR BUNKER FROM KARINSHAK

FOLLOWING SENT ACTION SECSTATE NEW DELHI INFO ADDIS ABABA
ARAB SUMMI CONFERENCE FROM RABAT

QUOTE C O N F I D E N T I A L RABAT 5242

NEW DELHI FOR SECRETARY'S PARTY

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR XF MO

SUBJ: ARAB SUMMIT: OCTOBER 27 PROCEEDINGS

1. SUMMARY. SECOND DAY OF ARAB SUMMIT OCT 27 WAS
DEVOTED PRIMARILY TO PRESENTATIONS BY KING HUSSEIN AND
YASSER ARAFAT ON THEIR RESPECTIVE POSITIONS. CHIEFS OF
STATE MET IN CLOSED MORNING AND EVENING SESSIONS, WITH
ONLY FOM MINS PRESENT. SPOKESMEN FOR BOTH PLO AND
JORDANIANS, MEANWHILE, WERE ACTIVE DURING DAY IN
ATTEMPTING TO ASSURE THAT THEIR VIEWS GOT ACROSS TO
OUTSIDE WORLD. THERE WAS NO SIGN OF PROGRESS TOWARD
RECONCILIATION, BOTH SIDES CONTINUING TO EXPRESS THEMSELVES
IN UNYIELDING TERMS. SUMMIT ORGANIZERS CURRENTLY
PLANNING FOR CLOSURE MORNING OCT 29. SIX PETROLEUM
MINISTERS ALSO MET OCT 27. END SUMMARY.

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2. PLO-JORDANIAN DISPUTE. SEMI-OFFICIAL PRESS, WHICH HAS

RETAINED RELATIVE OPTIMISM AS TO PROSPECTS FOR PLO-JORDANIAN RECONCILIATION, SAYS THAT SUMMIT DISCUSSIONS OCT 27 CENTERED ON SEARCH FOR COMPROMISE FORMULA BETWEEN KING HUSSEIN AND ARAFAT. (MEDIATORY EFFORTS ARE APPARENTLY BEING LED PRIMARILY BY HASSAN AND FAYSAL.) PLO DELEGATION REPORTEDLY REITERATED REJECTION OF ANY POSSIBILITY OF UNDERSTANDING WITH JORDAN CONCERNING QUESTION OF SETTING UP PALESTINIAN NATIONAL AUTHORITY OVER ANY PIECE OF PALESTINIAN TERRITORY WHICH MIGHT BE LIBERATED POLITICALLY OR MILITARILY. SOURCES CLOSE TO YASSER ARAFAT QUOTED AS SAYING THAT PLO WOULD NOT MODIFY ITS POSITION IN THE SLIGHTEST AS TO DEMAND FOR RECOGNITION AS EXCLUSIVE AND LEGITIMATE REPRESENTATIVE OF PALESTINIAN PEOPLE. PLO ALSO SAID TO "SCORN" JORDANIAN EFFORTS TO BRING ABOUT DISENGAGEMENT ON WEST BANK. KING HUSSEIN, SEMI-OFFICIAL PRESS CONTINUES, EXPLAINED "TO WHAT EXTENT" HE WAS WILLING TO ACCEPT AN INDEPENDENT PALESTINIAN ENTITY AND TO APPROVE FON MINS' DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS. HUSSEIN ALSO REPORTEDLY INDICATED HE WILLING TO GO TO GENEVA CONFERENCE WITH EGYPT AND SYRIA WITHIN FRAMEWORK OF SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION, TAKING POSITION THAT OUTSIDE OF THAT FRAMEWORK PLO HAD RIGHT TO SPEAK REGARDING LEGITIMATE RIGHTS OF PALESTINIAN PEOPLE.

3. COMMENTING ON WHETHER PLO PREPARED TO ASSUME ROLE IN GENEVA, PLO SPOKESMAN STATED THAT PLO HAD NOT YET WORKED OUT ITS POSITION WITH RESPECT TO GENEVA CONFERENCE, SEMI-OFFICIAL PRESS GOES ON. "INFLUENTIAL MEMBER OF PALESTINIAN DELEGATION" SAID TO HAVE EXPRESSED OPINION THAT ARAB LEAGUE LEGALLY COMPETENT TO NEGOTIATE RESTITUTION OF WEST BANK FOR PURPOSE OF TURNING IT OVER TO PLO, CONTENDING THAT INASMUCH AS ARAB LEAGUE TURNED OVER WEST BANK TO JORDAN AND GAZA TO EGYPT, IT WAS IN POSITION TO TAKE CHARGE OF THEIR RETURN TO LEGITIMATE OWNER, PALESTINIANS.

4. PRIMIN RIFAI, IN BACKGROUNDER TO JOURNALISTS, REPORTEDLY INDICATED JORDAN WOULD ACCEPT WILL OF SUMMIT CONFEREES, BUT CAUTIONED ABOUT RISKS OF EXCLUDING JORDAN FROM NEGOTIATING PROCESS. HE ALSO NOTED--IN OBLIQUE BUT OBVIOUS FASHION--INTEREST IN THIS ISSUE ON THE PART OF A CONFIDENTIAL

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"GREAT POWER." HE REFUSED, HOWEVER, TO SPELL THIS OUT, DESPITE BEING PRESSED HARD BY JOURNALISTS TO ACKNOWLEDGE HE WAS TALKING ABOUT US. SESSION REPORTEDLY MARKED BY HOSTILITY AND RUDENESS TOWARD RIFAI BY ARAB JOURNALISTS.

5. IN COMMENTING ON PLO-JORDANIAN DISPUTE, SEMI-OFFICIAL PRESS CONCLUDES THAT THERE ARE "STRONG CHANCES" THAT KING

HASSAN'S APPEAL TO JORDANIANS AND PALESTINIANS TO OVERCOME THEIR DIFFERENCES WILL BE HEARD. WEIGHING PROS AND CONS, SEMI-OFFICIAL PRESS WAIVERS SOMEWHAT, BUT CONTINUES TO EXHIBIT OVERALL BIAS TOWARD PLO, WHOSE CASE IT SEES AS "HISTORICALLY CONVINCING." JORDANIAN POSITION, WHILE UNDERSTANDABLE, IS ONE WHICH NOT ABLE TO RALLY SUPPORT, PRESS ASSERTS, ADDING ON OTHER HAND THAT RECOGNITION OF PLO AS SOLE AND LEGITIMATE REPRESENTATIVE OF PALESTINIANS IS NOT ENOUGH TO OBTAIN EVACUATION OF WEST BANK, AND THAT JORDANIAN CONTRIBUTION IN DIPLOMATIC EFFORTS THEREFORE INDISPENSABLE IN UNIFIED ARAB STRATEGY TO RECOVER WEST BANK.

6. OTHER OBSERVERS ARE LESS OPTIMISTIC, HOWEVER. ACCORDING TO AMERICAN JOURNALIST WITH CONNECTIONS IN EGYPTIAN PRESS CIRCLES, EGYPTIANS DEEPLY PESSIMISTIC AS OF EVENING OCT 27 THAT SATISFACTORY COMPROMISE COULD BE REACHED. ONLY BRIGHT POINT, ATTRIBUTED TO AL AHAM'S BAHAEDDINE, WAS THAT EGYPTIANS WOULD BE IN POSITION TO PURSUE PEACE EFFORTS IN THEIR OWN WAY IF NO UNIFIED ARAB STRATEGY ACHIEVED.

7. CLOSING CEREMONIES HAVE BEEN OFFICIALLY SCHEDULED FOR 0900 OCT 29. MANY OBSERVERS FEEL, HOWEVER, THAT SUMMIT WILL HAVE DIFFICULTY WINDING UP ITS WORK AS QUICKLY AS THIS. THERE IS SPECULATION THAT A "MINI-SUMMIT" MAY FOLLOW IN ALGIERS, WHERE MANY HEADS OF STATE WILL BE ATTENDING NOV 1 ANNIVERSARY OF ALGERIAN REVOLUTION.

8. OTHER ISSUES.

(A) SAHARA. MEANWHILE, UMT ORGAN "MAGHREB INFORMATIONS" REPORTS THAT A DRAFT EGYPTIAN RESOLUTION ON SAHARA IS BEFORE SUMMIT. NEWSPAPER INDICATES THAT ALGERIANS HAVE OPPOSED DISCUSSION OF DRAFT AND MOROCCO CONFIDENTIAL

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NOT INSISTING ON PURSUING MATTER. RESOLUTION REPORTEDLY EXPRESSES ARAB SATISFACTION OVER MOROCCAN-MAURITANIAN SOLIDARITY AND REAFFIRMS ARAB SUPPORT FOR PURSUIT OF GOM-GIRM EFFORTS BEFORE INTERNATIONAL BODIES. RESOLUTION ALSO SAID TO APPEAL TO SPAIN TO COME TO AGREEMENT WITH MOROCCO AND MAURITANIA.

(B) IRAQ-IRAN. PRESS INDICATES THAT IRAQI PROPOSAL TO DISCUSS IRAQI-IRANIAN DISPUTE HAS MET WITH MIXED REACTION.

9. ATTENDANCE. SOMALI PRESIDENT SIAD BARRE ARRIVED AFTER OPENING CEREMONIES OCT 26 BUT PARTICIPATING IN REST OF PROCEEDINGS. MEANWHILE RUMOR HAS IT THAT MOROCCANS, AMONG OTHERS, EXPRESSED OBJECTION TO ADMITTING LOW-LEVEL LIBYAN REPRESENTATIVE (HE IS HIS COUNTRY'S AMBASSADOR TO

PARIS) INTO SUMMIT DISCUSSIONS, BUT APPARENTLY LIBYAN ENDED UP TAKING PART.

10. PETROLEUM MINISTERS OF SAUDI ARABIA, ALGERIA, UAE, QATAR, BAHREIN AND KUWAIT REPORTEDLY HELD MEETING IN RABAT EVENING OCT 27. PURPOSE WAS TO "STUDY A COMMON POSITION OF ARAB OIL PRODUCERS FOLLOWING THREATS OF CONSUMER COUNTRIES." NO FURTHER DETAILS RELEASED.

11. COMMENT. WHETHER SUMMIT WILL COME UP WITH PLO-JORDANIAN COMPROMISE THUS REMAINS COMPLETELY UP IN AIR, WITH NO CONCRETE REASONS FOR ARAB OPTIMISM THAT WE CAN DETECT. HOWEVER, FACT THAT ARABS HAVE A LOT RIDING ON SOME SORT OF FAVORABLE OUTCOME CONTINUES TO LEAVE OPEN POSSIBILITY OF LAST-MINUTE, DRAMATIC SOLUTION, IN THE VIEW OF A NUMBER OF SERIOUS ANALYSTS HERE.

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